

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Hartford**

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Betty J. Sternberg, Commissioner of Education

SUBJECT: Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) Program Portfolio  
Performance Results

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of BEST portfolio performance and related demographic data for beginning teachers submitting portfolios in the spring of 2003 who were required to meet the portfolio performance standard. In addition, the report includes program evaluation data regarding mentor support and teacher attitudes toward the portfolio assessment. Highlights of the report are summarized below.

**BACKGROUND OF THE BEST PROGRAM**

The Connecticut State Department of Education's BEST Program is an outgrowth of Connecticut's long-standing educational policy agenda that recognizes that a well-qualified and trained teaching force is integral to improving student achievement. The BEST Program fulfills the statutory mandate that beginning teachers be provided a mentor and demonstrate the attainment of professional standards of teaching competency in order to be eligible for continued certification.<sup>1</sup>

First implemented in 1989, the BEST Program has evolved into a two-year comprehensive program of *support* and *assessment*. The support component consists of school- or district-based mentors or support teams and state-sponsored training, such as portfolio clinics and discipline-specific support seminars. The assessment component requires beginning teachers in their second year of teaching to submit a content-specific teaching portfolio. The portfolio documents a five- to eight-hour unit of instruction with one class, including teacher lesson plans, videotaped segments of teaching, student work, and reflective commentaries on the teaching and learning that took place during the unit. In order to be eligible for the provisional educator certificate, beginning teachers must demonstrate, through the portfolio assessment, mastery of essential teaching competencies related to teacher content knowledge, planning, instruction and assessment. Beginning teachers who do not successfully complete the portfolio assessment in year two are required to submit a portfolio in their third of teaching.

<sup>1</sup> Section 10-145f(d) and 10-220a of the Connecticut General Statutes

## KEY FINDINGS OF REPORT AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Only 1.5 percent of beginning teachers failed to meet the portfolio performance standard after their third year in the BEST Program;
- Beginning teachers in priority districts do not do as well in the portfolio assessment as those beginning teachers in the more affluent districts;
- The majority of beginning teachers report receiving adequate support from their mentors during both their first and second years of teaching;
- Beginning teachers also receive support from other individuals, and report relatively high levels of satisfaction; and
- More than 90 percent of beginning teachers report that the portfolio afforded them the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to design and implement instruction and assess their students' learning; however, only 75 percent indicated that the portfolio demonstrates their ability to manage their classroom.

The data in this report raise some questions for which further research and studies are needed. For example -

- Why is there a difference in performance on the portfolio assessment between teachers in priority districts and those in more affluent districts?
- Is the BEST portfolio appropriately situated in a teacher's career continuum?
- Is there a continuing impact of the portfolio assessment upon the teaching practices of beginning teachers after they complete the portfolio? What is the impact of the Connecticut portfolio induction process on the teaching practices of mentors and portfolio scorers?
- How are districts using federal Title II funds or other local funds to support new teachers and their mentors?

The Department will continue to make improvements to the BEST Program, including the following initiatives:

- (1) Expansion of on-line resources for beginning teachers and mentors;
- (2) Production and dissemination of CD-Rom resources for beginning teachers, mentors and principals;
- (3) Focusing of BEST Program technical assistance to support urban and priority districts;
- (4) Promoting "master mentor" models of support;
- (5) Continued review of the BEST portfolio handbook requirements; and
- (6) Use of expanded federal Title II Teacher Quality grants to support the BEST Program in local districts.

This report also suggests the need to re-examine some BEST Program policies and funding levels to ensure there is equity of support and access to high quality professional development for beginning teachers and mentors at both the state and local levels.

In the upcoming year, the Department will critically examine current policies and procedures of the BEST Program and its place in Connecticut's Continuum for Teacher Quality. Our goal is to build upon the successes of this nationally-recognized program while considering program modifications that are consistent with today's context of attracting and maintaining high quality teachers.

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March 3, 2004

# **BEGINNING EDUCATOR SUPPORT AND TRAINING (BEST) PROGRAM PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE RESULTS 1999-2003**

## **BACKGROUND**

The Connecticut State Department of Education's Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) Program is an outgrowth of Connecticut's long-standing educational policy agenda that recognizes that a well-qualified and trained teaching force is integral to improving student achievement. The BEST Program fulfills the statutory mandate that beginning teachers be provided a mentor and demonstrate the attainment of professional standards of teaching competency in order to be eligible for continued certification.

First implemented in 1989, the BEST Program has evolved into a two-year comprehensive program of *support* and *assessment*. The support component consists of school or district-based mentors or support teams and state-sponsored training, such as portfolio clinics and discipline-specific support seminars. The assessment component requires beginning teachers in their second year of teaching to submit a teaching portfolio. In order to be eligible for the provisional educator certificate, beginning teachers must demonstrate, through the portfolio assessment, mastery of essential teaching competencies related to teacher content knowledge, planning, instruction and assessment. Beginning teachers who do not successfully complete the portfolio assessment in year two are required to submit a portfolio in their third of teaching.

The two main goals of the BEST program are: (1) to provide support to new teachers so that they remain in the teaching profession and (2) to promote excellence and equity for Connecticut students by improving teaching and, more importantly, the learning of students. The BEST Program accomplishes these two goals by requiring teachers to have state-trained mentors and holding teachers accountable for meeting licensing standards through the portfolio assessment.

## **THE BEST PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT**

The BEST portfolio has been designed to elicit evidence of what teachers actually do in their classrooms on a daily basis, specifically, planning, teaching and evaluating student learning. The portfolio documents approximately 5-8 hours of instruction with one class and includes teacher lesson plans, videotaped segments of teaching (usually two 20-minute segments), and student work during that unit. Teachers prepare daily logs and written commentaries in which they reflect on their teaching and their students' learning and explain what they would do differently if they were to teach the lesson or unit again. The remainder of the portfolio documentation consists of student work samples and materials used in the teaching of the unit (handouts, daily assignments, etc.). Portfolios are scored by experienced teachers in the same content area as the beginning teacher. The scorers undergo over 50 hours of extensive training as portfolio scorers and who meet proficiency standards for portfolio scoring. It takes approximately 4-6 hours for an assessor to evaluate and score a teaching portfolio.

The portfolio assessment must meet assessment standards that have been developed by the Joint Committee of the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association and the National Council on Measurement in Education. These standards require that the assessment be both *valid* (i.e., the portfolio measures what it is intended to measure) and *reliable* (i.e., standards are applied consistently by assessors in the evaluation process). Accordingly, the portfolio scoring process must be comprehensive and consistent, and assessors must demonstrate that they can apply judgment in a pre-scribed and consistent manner through the “proficiency process.”

## PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Beginning in 1999, portfolios in different content areas have been phasing into “full implementation status,” meaning that beginning teachers completing portfolios are held to a minimum performance standard. Portfolio scores range from a “1” (representing the lowest performance) to “4” (representing the highest performance). In order to “pass” the BEST portfolio assessment, beginning teachers must achieve a score of “2” or higher on the portfolio assessment. Beginning teachers who score a “1” in their second year of teaching are eligible for a third year in the BEST Program and up to two additional opportunities to submit a portfolio. Any teacher failing to meet the performance standard in year three is ineligible for reissuance of the initial certificate. However, these individuals may re-enter the teaching profession by completing an approved plan of intervening study and experience<sup>2</sup> and meeting the requirements for the initial educator certificate.

The following chart summarizes the portfolio content areas in the “full implementation” status:

School Year	Content Areas in "Full" Implementation Status
1999-2000	English language arts, mathematics, science
2000-2001	English language arts, mathematics, science, special education
2001-2002	English language arts, mathematics, science, special education, elementary education, music, physical education, social studies
2002-2003	English language arts, mathematics, science, special education, elementary education, music, physical education, social studies

Note that for 2001-2002 and 2002-2003, there were two content areas in which the portfolio assessment was not yet fully validated (world languages and visual arts). Visual Arts has been phased into the full implementation status as of the 2003-2004 school year, and it is anticipated that world languages will be implemented as of the 2004-2005 school year.

<sup>2</sup> Current guidelines for eligibility for reissuance of the initial educator certificate through completion of intervening study and experience were approved by the State Board on October 3, 2001.

## CONTENTS OF THIS REPORT

Presented in this report is a comprehensive analysis of BEST portfolio performance and related demographic data for the 1,747 beginning teachers submitting portfolios in the spring of 2003 who were required to meet the portfolio performance standard (representing content areas in full implementation status). For comparison purposes, portfolio performance data is also included for those areas in full implementation status in 1999-2000, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002. In addition, program evaluation data regarding mentor support and teacher attitudes toward the portfolio assessment have been included. These data are collected through a demo-graphic questionnaire submitted concurrently with the portfolio. Of the 1,747 beginning teachers representing content areas in full implementation status who submitted portfolios in 2002-2003, questionnaires were received from 1,714, which represents a 98 percent response rate.

### BEST 2002-2003 TEACHER DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

TABLE 1 presents Connecticut teacher demographics for the school year 2002-2003, including numbers of beginning teachers enrolled in BEST during 2002-2003 and numbers of experienced teachers who have been or continue to be involved in the BEST program as either mentors or portfolio scorers to this date. TABLE 1 also presents the number of BEST graduates (those completing portfolios) who were teaching in Connecticut during 2002-2003 and as of this year, the numbers of BEST graduates who had been trained to serve as mentors or portfolio scorers.

As shown in TABLE 1, the impact of BEST in terms of numbers has been considerable. As of 2002-2003, more than one-quarter (28 percent) of Connecticut's certified teaching population have been trained as either a mentor or a BEST portfolio scorer. Approximately 13,500 teachers have completed BEST portfolios, and a considerable percentage of these (18 percent) are trained as either mentors or portfolio scorers.

TABLE 1. 2002-2003 Connecticut Teacher Demographics

# Certified Teachers in CT:	
Teachers	42,733
Pupil Services Specialists	5,539
Administrators	3,158
TOTAL	51,430
# BEST Beginning Teachers:	
Year 1	2,770
Year 2	2,061 <sup>3</sup>
Year 3	212 <sup>4</sup>
TOTAL	5,043
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# Certified Staff Mentor Trained	13,144
# Certified Staff Scorer Trained	1,132
TOTAL	14,276
# Certified Staff Serving as Mentors for 1st and 2nd year teachers	
	3,600
# Certified Staff Serving as Scorers	530
TOTAL	4,130
# BEST Graduates teaching in CT	
# BEST Graduates Mentor Trained	13,514
# BEST Graduates Scorer Trained	2,049
TOTAL	385
	2,434

<sup>3</sup> Note that, of the 2,061 beginning teachers registered as second year teachers, 1,747 submitted portfolios, 228 were approved for a portfolio exemption because of the unique nature of their teaching assignment, and 86 did not submit a portfolio at the end of their second year.

<sup>4</sup> This number represents third year teachers who either received a score of "1" on their first portfolio or deferred submission to year three.

TABLE 2 shows the distribution of beginning teachers across the eight content areas with their school type. The majority of beginning teachers completing BEST were elementary education teachers (48 percent), followed by special education (11 percent) and English language arts teachers (10 per-cent). Approximately half (52 percent) of the teachers were teaching in elementary schools.

TABLE 2. BEST Beginning Teachers, 2002-2003:  
Content Area & School Type (n=1747)

		#	%
CONTENT AREA	Elementary Education	838	48
	English Language Arts	174	10
	Math	104	6
	Music	76	4
	Physical Education	80	5
	Science	133	8
	Social Studies	143	8
	Special Education	199	11
Group Total		1747	100
SCHOOL TYPE	Elementary School	900	52
	Middle/Junior High	351	20
	High School	422	24
	Other School	74	4
Group Total		1747	100

TABLE 3. BEST Beginning Teachers, 2002-2003:

		#	%
Gender Group	Female	1328	76
	Male	419	24
Group Total		1747	100
Ethnicity	Asian American	19	1
	Black	44	3
	Hispanic	33	2
	Native American	3	0
	White	1629	93
	Other	19	1
Group Total		1747	100
Degree Status	Ph.D.	20	1
	Sixth Year Degree	30	2
	Master's Degree	693	40
	Bachelor's Degree	1004	57
Group Total		1747	100

TABLE 3 shows gender, ethnicity and degree status statistics for the beginning teachers who completed BEST portfolios in content areas held to a performance standard in 2002-2003.

- Three-quarters (76 percent) of the 2002-2003 beginning teacher BEST portfolio population is female. This gender distribution is similar for the entire Connecticut teacher population.

- The majority of 2002-2003 beginning teachers were white (93 percent), with a six percent minority representation consisting of Asian American, Hispanic, Native American and black teachers. Like gender, this race distribution is similar for the entire Connecticut teacher population.

- Forty percent of the 2002- 2003 beginning teacher BEST portfolio population held Master's degrees.

TABLE 4 shows Educational Reference Group (ERG) statistics for the 2002-2003 BEST portfolio cohort. ERGs divide Connecticut's 166 districts and three academies into nine groups, A through I, based upon socio-economic status, indicators of need and enrollment. The most affluent Connecticut cities/towns comprise ERG A; the least affluent comprise ERG I.

As shown in TABLE 4, 27 percent of the 2002-2003 beginning teachers were employed in ERGs H and I.

TABLE 4. BEST Beginning Teachers, 2002-2003:  
ERG Distribution (n=1747)

		#	%
DISTRICT ERG	A (12 districts)	121	7
	B (19 districts)	283	16
	C (38 districts)	174	10
	D (21 districts)	240	14
	E (26 districts)	57	3
	F (16 districts)	216	12
	G (16 districts)	76	4
	H (14 districts)	223	13
	I (7 districts)	252	14
Group Total	Not Applicable	105	6
		1747	100

FIGURE 1. Connecticut Priority School Districts and Beginning Teacher Population, 2002-2003

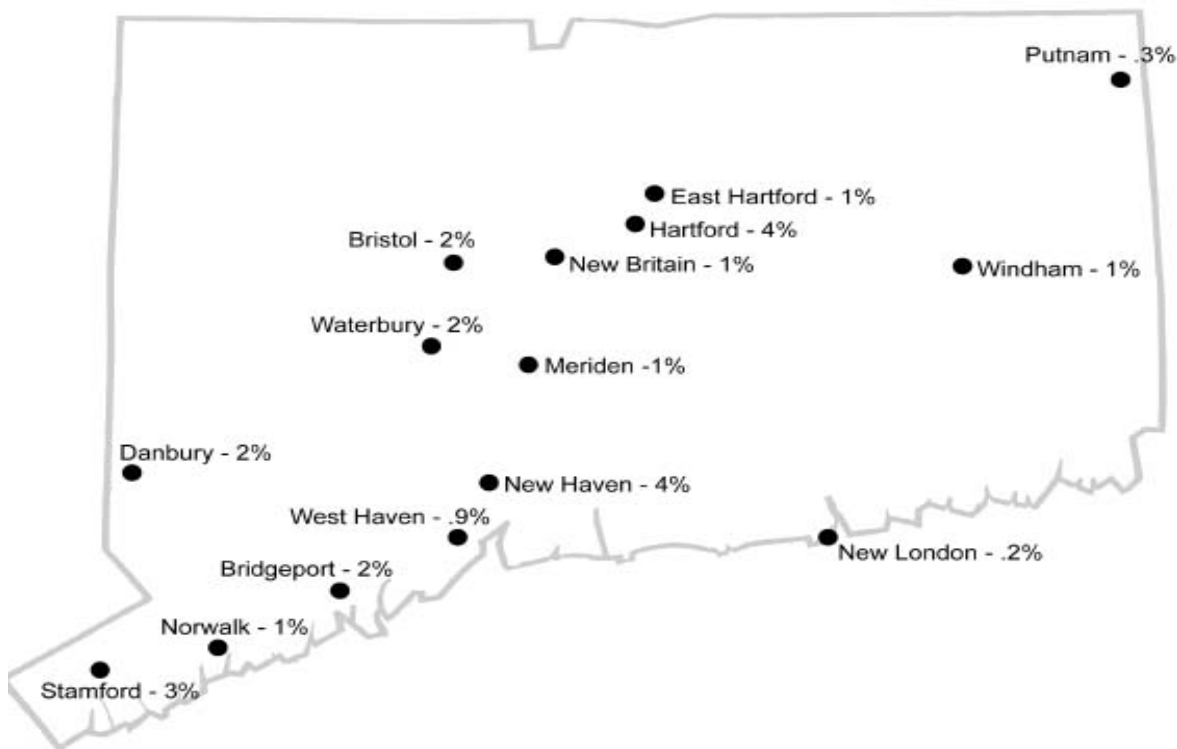


FIGURE 1 shows all priority school districts in Connecticut for 2002-2003 and exact percentages of beginning teachers who completed portfolios in content areas held to the performance standard for 2002-2003. A total of 455 (26 percent) beginning teachers who completed portfolios in 2002-2003 were employed in priority school districts.



## TEACHER PREPARATION

TABLE 5 shows that 65 percent of the beginning teachers reported that they had received recommendation for initial certification from Connecticut universities and six percent reported that they were ARC graduates. Twenty-four percent indicated that they were prepared outside of Connecticut.

TABLE 5. BEST Beginning Teachers, 2002-2003:  
Recommending Institutes (n=1655)

		#	%
RECOMMENDING INSTITUTE	Central Connecticut	166	10
	University of Bridgeport	86	5
	University of Connecticut	84	5
	University of Hartford	71	4
	University of New Haven	79	5
	Western Connecticut State University	48	3
	Yale University	4	0
	Alternate Route to Certification (ARC)	97	6
	Out of State	393	24
	Other	24	1
	Connecticut College	11	1
	Eastern Connecticut State University	85	5
	Fairfield University	31	2
	Quinnipiac University	29	2
	Sacred Heart University	127	8
	Saint Joseph College	78	5
	Southern Connecticut State University	242	15
Group Total		1747	100

Note: 92 teachers did not complete this survey item.

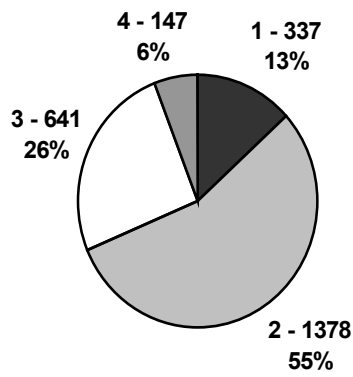


FIGURE 2.  
BEST Portfolio Performance,  
2002-2003 (n= 2503)

## BEST 2002 PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE

FIGURE 2 shows the distribution of portfolio scores for the 2002-2003 beginning teacher cohort. Please note that the total number of teachers included in this distribution of scores is 2,503 rather than 1,747. This is due to elementary teachers receiving separate portfolio scores for literacy and numeracy. Elementary education teachers are required to demonstrate competency in both teaching literacy and teaching numeracy in order to pass the BEST portfolio. If teachers pass one area (e.g., the literacy portion of the portfolio) but fail the other (e.g., the numeracy portion of the portfolio), they are required to resubmit another numeracy teaching performance for scoring.<sup>5</sup> As shown by the pie chart,

the distribution of portfolio scores resembles somewhat of a “normal” distribution, with scores mostly in the “2” and “3” categories and comparatively fewer scores in the tails of the distribution, or the “1” and “4” performance categories. The majority of scores fall into the “2” performance category, which is the level at which we would expect most beginning teachers to perform.

<sup>5</sup> For 2002-2003: 82 (10%) elem. ed. teachers completed either the literacy or numeracy parts of the portfolio. 756 (90%) elem. ed. teachers completed both the literacy and numeracy parts of the portfolio. Of the 756, 69 (9%) elem. ed. teachers failed both the literacy and numeracy parts of the portfolio.

TABLE 6 shows portfolio score distributions for content areas held to performance standards from 1999 to 2003. In aggregate over the last three school years, approximately 89 percent of beginning teachers submitting portfolios in content areas under full implementation status have successfully completed the BEST portfolio in their first attempt. To date, 26 beginning teachers have failed to meet the performance standard in their third year of teaching and 33 teachers failed to submit a portfolio during their three years of participation in the BEST Program. Of the 26 who failed to meet the performance standard, 4 have regained their certification to date, by fulfilling the requirements of a period of intervening study and experience. The total of 55 beginning teachers who lost their teaching certificates represents approximately 1.5 percent of the 3,759 beginning teachers held to a performance standard in 1999-2000, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002.

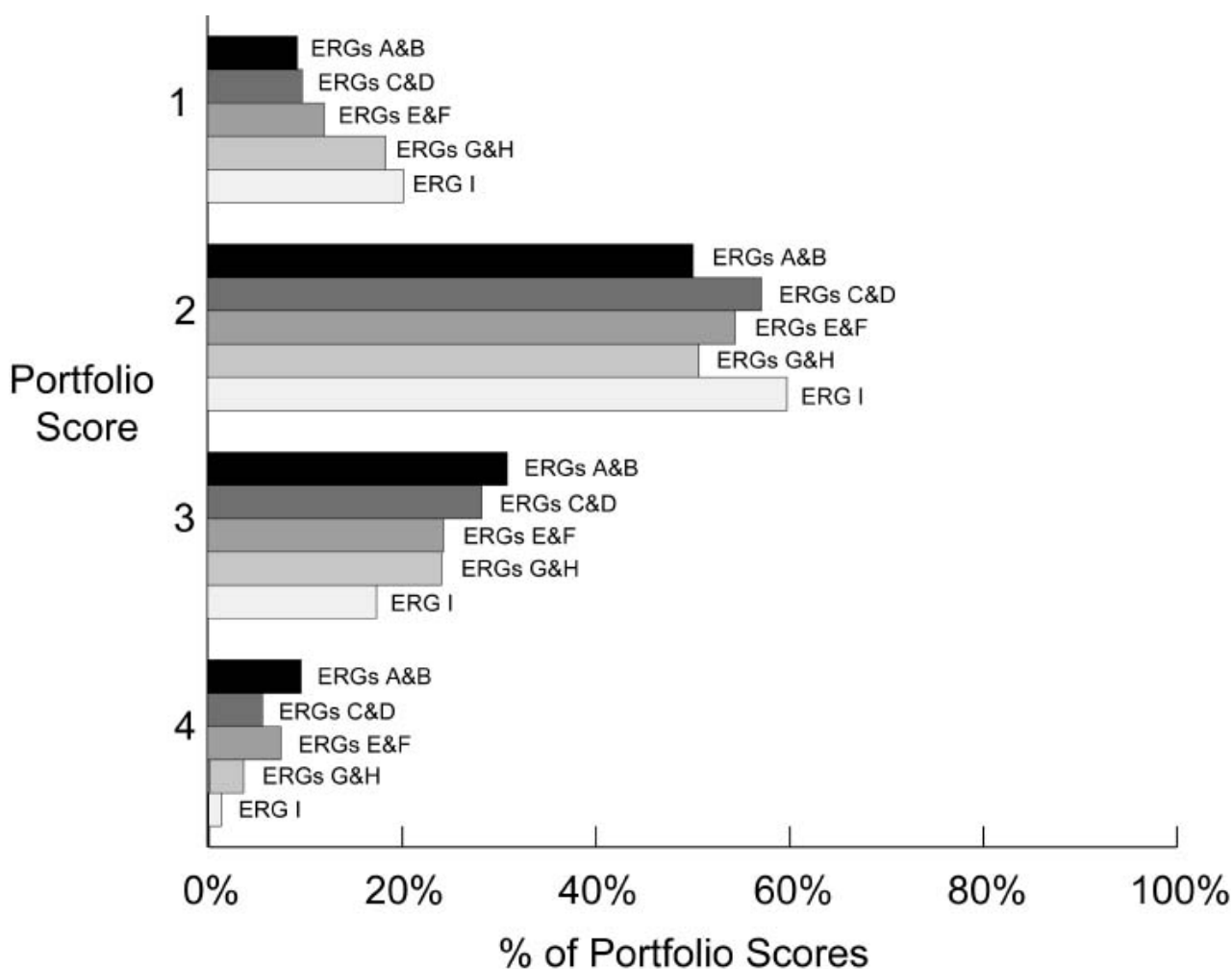
TABLE 6. BEST Portfolio Performance, 1999-2003

CONTENT AREA	PORTFOLIO SCORE				
	1	2	3	4	TOTAL
Year 1999-2000					
English Language Arts	12 (8%)	47 (32%)	52 (35%)	37 (25%)	148
Math	5 (7%)	38 (56%)	24 (35%)	1 (2%)	68
Science	14 (12%)	61 (52%)	34 (29%)	8 (7%)	117
TOTAL	31 (9%)	146 (44%)	110 (33%)	46 (14%)	333
Year 2000-2001					
English Language Arts	40 (21%)	68 (35%)	65 (33%)	22 (11%)	195
Math	11 (9%)	52 (42%)	55 (45%)	5 (4%)	123
Science	13 (8%)	55 (34%)	82 (52%)	9 (6%)	159
Special Education	16 (7%)	137 (56%)	72 (29%)	21 (9%)	246
TOTAL	80 (11%)	312 (43%)	274 (38%)	57 (8%)	723
Year 2001-2002					
Elem. Ed. - Literacy	75 (9%)	465 (56%)	268 (32%)	23 (3%)	831
Elem. Ed. - Numeracy	98 (12%)	512 (63%)	190 (23%)	18 (2%)	818
English Language Arts	30 (15%)	97 (49%)	58 (30%)	11 (6%)	196
Mathematics	7 (6%)	66 (57%)	37 (32%)	6 (5%)	116
Music	10 (13%)	28 (35%)	29 (37%)	12 (15%)	79
Physical Education	7 (6%)	49 (43%)	45 (40%)	12 (11%)	113
Science	13 (8%)	80 (50%)	48 (30%)	18 (11%)	159
Social Studies	8 (5%)	71 (46%)	60 (39%)	16 (10%)	155
Special Education	17 (7%)	102 (43%)	113 (48%)	4 (2%)	236
TOTAL	265 (10%)	1470 (54%)	848 (31%)	120 (5%)	2703
Year 2002-2003					
Elem. Ed. - Literacy	104 (13%)	462 (57%)	203 (25%)	41 (5%)	810
Elem. Ed. - Numeracy	128 (16%)	465 (59%)	163 (21%)	28 (4%)	784
English Language Arts	24 (14%)	79 (45%)	60 (35%)	11 (6%)	174
Mathematics	6 (6%)	57 (55%)	27 (26%)	14 (13%)	104
Music	7 (9%)	35 (46%)	22 (29%)	12 (16%)	76
Physical Education	6 (7%)	38 (48%)	25 (31%)	11 (14%)	80
Science	17 (13%)	65 (49%)	41 (31%)	10 (7%)	133
Social Studies	22 (15%)	76 (53%)	38 (27%)	7 (5%)	143
Special Education	23 (12%)	101 (51%)	62 (31%)	13 (6%)	199
TOTAL	337 (13%)	1378 (55%)	641 (26%)	147 (6%)	2503
TOTAL 1999-2003	713 (11%)	3306 (53%)	1873 (30%)	370 (6%)	6262

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PORTFOLIO SCORES AND ERG

FIGURE 3 shows the relationship between portfolio scores of beginning teachers who completed portfolios in content areas held to a performance standard in 2002-2003 and Connecticut ERG groups. For reporting purposes here, the nine ERG groups have been collapsed into five groups: A&B, C&D, E&F, G&H, and I. Recall that ERGs A&B are comprised of the more affluent districts in Connecticut, while ERG I is comprised of the least affluent districts; and that all of ERG I districts are comprised of the large Connecticut cities — Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Waterbury and Windham. FIGURE 3 shows that teachers teaching in more affluent districts perform better on the BEST portfolio compared to teachers teaching in less affluent districts. The more affluent the district (e.g., ERGs A&B), the higher the portfolio performance; the less affluent the district (e.g., ERG I), the lower the portfolio performance. Research exploring explanations for this phenomenon needs to be conducted.

FIGURE 3. The Relationship Between Portfolio Scores and ERG, 2002-2003 (n=2503)



Note: The portfolio score by ERG analysis is based on 2,503 teachers (2,379 teachers minus 124 who did not teach in ERG associated districts) rather than 1,747, due to elementary education teachers receiving separate scores for literacy and numeracy and being counted twice.

## MENTOR SUPPORT

TABLE 7 shows that only 62 percent of beginning teachers completing portfolios said that they had had a mentor or mentoring team in their content area who also taught in their school building.

TABLE 7. BEST Beginning Teachers, 2002-2003:		#	%
1st YEAR MENTOR SITUATION	Mentor in content area & building	982	58
	Mentor in content area, not building	84	5
	Mentor in building, not content area	440	26
	Mentor not in content area or building	34	2
	Team mentoring-content area & building	74	4
	Team mentoring-content area, not building	9	1
	Team mentoring-building, not content area	31	2
	Other mentor situation	51	3
Group Total		1705	100
NOTE: 42 teachers did not respond to this survey item.			

TABLE 8 shows how the 2002-2003 portfolio cohort rated the level of help they received from various sources of support during portfolio completion. Over 80 percent of the teachers indicated that they had received support from other teachers who had already completed portfolios, other teachers completing portfolios at the same time, or assigned mentors, and reported high levels of satisfaction with the support they received from these individuals.

TABLE 8. BEST Beginning Teachers, 2002-2003: Sources of Support, 2002-2003 (n=1747)

How helpful were various sources of support for you as you completed your portfolio?		# and % responding to item	% said source was helpful (3 scale points combined)				
Teachers Who Completed Portfolios Previously	1592 (91%)	86%	35%	29%	22%	9%	6%
Beginning Teachers Also Completing Portfolios	1524 (87%)	77%	29%	28%	24%	10%	10%
Formally Assigned Mentor	1508 (86%)	80%	34%	23%	20%	10%	14%
BEST Seminar Leaders	1294 (74%)	67%	21%	31%	28%	11%	9%
Principal	1241 (71%)	68%	14%	23%	30%	16%	17%
District Facilitator	1282 (73%)	89%	16%	22%	30%	17%	16%
Other Colleagues Examples: informal mentors, BEST scorers, experienced teachers	1041 (59%)	89%	60%	18%	11%	3%	9%
Department Chair	879 (50%)	60%	16%	21%	23%	17%	24%
			Very Helpful		Not Very Helpful		

Teachers were also asked about three additional sources of support related to portfolio completion. Seventy-one percent indicated that their teacher preparation courses helped prepare them for BEST portfolio challenges, 69 percent that their student teaching experiences helped prepare them, and 84 percent said that their first year of teaching helped prepare them to complete the BEST portfolio.

## TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

TABLE 9 presents 2002-2003 portfolio cohort responses to nine statements pertaining to the usefulness of completing a BEST portfolio. Three-quarters (75 percent) or more of the 2002-2003 beginning teachers completing BEST portfolios either strongly agreed or agreed with all nine of the impact statements. More than 90 percent of the beginning teachers indicated that completing a BEST portfolio demonstrated their ability to design and implement instruction and assess student learning.

TABLE 9. BEST Beginning Teachers, 2003-2003: Attitudes Towards the Portfolio Process (n=1747)					
<b><i>Completing this portfolio provided me the opportunity to demonstrate:</i></b>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
my content area knowledge in a way that was not assessed with the Praxis II exam.	402 (23%)	989 (57%)	235 (14%)	59 (3%)	1685
my understanding of the content standards.	368 (21%)	1152 (66%)	142 (8%)	33 (2%)	1695
my ability to design instruction.	587 (34%)	1005 (58%)	75 (4%)	31 (2%)	1698
my ability to implement instruction.	569 (33%)	981 (56%)	113 (7%)	35 (2%)	1699
my ability to assess student work.	543 (31%)	1019 (58%)	110 (6%)	25 (1%)	1697
my ability to monitor/adjust instruction based on student assessment.	573 (33%)	986 (56%)	111 (6%)	23 (1%)	1693
my ability to modify instruction based on accommodations to students' special needs/interests/backgrounds.	497 (28%)	1005 (58%)	163 (9%)	31 (2%)	1697
my ability to manage my classroom.	385 (22%)	932 (53%)	294 (17%)	84 (5%)	1695
my ability to reflect upon my teaching practices.	764 (44%)	858 (49%)	54 (3%)	19 (1%)	1695
Note: Sample sizes for each question reflect a number of teachers who did not answer that particular question.					

## SUMMARY OF REPORT AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Major Finding: *Only 1.5 percent of beginning teachers failed to meet the performance standard after their third year in the BEST Program.*

Policy Implications: These data suggest that the BEST Program is successfully meeting its mandate of both improving the overall quality of the new teacher workforce by promoting standards-based instruction. Only a small number of teachers are “screened out” after having multiple opportunities to submit a portfolio; however, a substantial number of these teachers who fail are from priority districts. Additional studies need to be conducted in this area.

Major Finding: *Beginning teachers in priority districts do not perform as well in the portfolio assessment as those beginning teachers in the more affluent districts.*

Policy Implications: More study and analyses are needed to explain the causes for this.

Major Finding: *Beginning Teachers also receive support from other individuals, and report relatively high levels of satisfaction.*

Policy Implications: More training in the portfolio process needs to be provided to building administrators, as fewer than half of beginning teachers sought help from principals and department chairs.

Major Finding: *More than 90 percent on average of beginning teachers report that the portfolio afforded them the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to design and implement instruction and assess their students’ learning; however, only 75 percent indicated that the portfolio demonstrates their ability to manage their classroom.*

Policy Implications: These data support the validity of the portfolio assessment as a credible and authentic representation of a teacher’s daily work through lesson plans, videotapes of teaching and student work. Although a lesser percentage of candidates believe that the portfolio provided them opportunities to demonstrate their ability to manage the classroom, the videotape portion of the portfolio documents only about 40 minutes of actual classroom instruction. Nonetheless, we believe that the BEST Program needs to provide more support and professional development to teachers around classroom management and address, in particular, the special needs of teachers in urban districts.